

*A1*  
16. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said disposable material is further biologically degraded to essentially carbon dioxide and methane.

*A2*  
31. (Amended) The method of Claim 29, wherein said blotting compound is selected from the group consisting of water grabbers, at least one alkaline compound that neutralizes acid, dry mineral fillers, and mixtures thereof.

*A3*  
51. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said controlled manner of hydrolytic degradation is achieved by a process selected from the group consisting of decreasing the crystallinity of said material, increasing the free volume of said material, decreasing the orientation of said material, decreasing the molecular weight of said material, increasing the surface area of said material, and mixtures thereof.

*A4*  
72. (Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said microbial degradation is augmented by adding at least one source of nutrients to said disposable material, wherein said nutrients promote the activity of a microorganism that degrades said disposable material.

82. (Amended) A method for producing an environmentally degradable disposable material comprising:

*A5*  
(I) providing a material comprising a hydroxycarboxylic acid-containing polymer hydrolytically degrades during operative and disposal stages in a controlled manner such that the disposal degradation rate of said material is accelerated relative to the operative degradation rate of said material; and

(II) selecting at least one step from the group consisting of:

- (a) adding at least one activator compound to said material;
- (b) adding at least one blotting compound to said material;
- (c) coating said material with at least one coating compound;
- (d) producing a material comprising a copolymer;
- (e) adding at least one plasticizer to said material;
- (f) decreasing the crystallinity of said material;
- (g) increasing the free volume of said material;

*AS*

- (h) decreasing the orientation of said material;
- (i) decreasing the molecular weight of said material;
- (j) increasing the surface area of said material
- (k) applying a stress to said material;
- (l) adding at least one hydrophobic compound to said material;
- (m) adding at least one end-capping agent to said material; and
- (n) cross-linking said material.

83. (Amended) The method of Claim 82, wherein said material is further degraded by biological degradation.

84. (Amended) The method of Claim 82, wherein said material is further degraded by microbial degradation.

*AC*

104. (Amended) The method of Claim 82, wherein said disposable material is further biologically degraded to essentially carbon dioxide and water.

105. (Amended) The method of Claim 82, wherein said disposable material is further biologically degraded to essentially carbon dioxide and methane.

*AT*

129. (Amended) An environmentally degradable disposable material comprising a hydroxycarboxylic acid-containing polymer, wherein said material degrades hydrolytically during operative and disposal stages in a controlled manner such that the disposal degradation rate of said material is accelerated relative to the operative degradation rate of said material and wherein said material is produced by a method comprising at least one step selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) adding at least one activator compound to said material;
- (b) adding at least one blotting compound to said material;
- (c) coating said material with at least one coating compound;
- (d) producing a material comprising a copolymer;
- (e) adding at least one plasticizer to said material;
- (f) decreasing the crystallinity of said material;

*AF*

- (g) increasing the free volume of said material;
- (h) decreasing the orientation of said material;
- (i) decreasing the molecular weight of said material;
- (j) increasing the surface area of said material
- (k) applying a stress to said material;
- (l) adding at least one hydrophobic compound to said material;
- (m) adding at least one end-capping agent to said material; and
- (n) cross-linking said material.

130. (Amended) The method of Claim 129, wherein said material is further degraded by biological degradation.

131. (Amended) The method of Claim 129, wherein said material is further degraded by microbial degradation.

*AS*

151. (Amended) The disposable material of Claim 129, wherein said disposable material is further biologically degraded to essentially carbon dioxide and water.

152. (Amended) The disposable material of Claim 129, wherein said disposable material is further biologically degraded to essentially carbon dioxide and methane.